New Viewer's Guide

Cornell Japanese Animation Society

Have you ever walked into an anime showing and seen that the second or third part of a series was being shown when you hadn't seen the first?

Have you ever found yourself part of a conversation about one of those classics that *everyone* has seen ... but you haven't?

Have you ever been confused by certain terms that everyone else seems to know the meaning of because they use them all the time without explaining them?

If you can answer "Yes!" to any of the above questions, this guide is for you. It will hopefully make you feel a little more at home in the world of anime. It covers series that the club is likely to show or any show that we felt was widely watched enough that someone might find themselves lost in a conversation about it. We also have included some basic vocabulary that tends to keep cropping up.

Since this is designed to help someone beginning in the middle of a series, the ends of some episodes are included where deemed necessary to understand some later show, but they are set off between rows of asterices, so that people who don't like spoilers can avoid them. If a series is episodic rather than telling a continuing story, the basic premise of the show may be given rather than an episode-by-episode synopsis.

One caution, though. Most shows do not sound as good on paper as they actually are in film. Therefore, just because a show does not sound appealing from our synopsis here, that does not mean it isn't worth seeing.

The different shows in this booklet have been covered by different members of CJAS and also some pieces have been taken from other works. Credit is given to both the author and the source (if no one is listed that means it was done by K Hindall, if no source then it was done specifically for this guide). Corrections, suggestions, submissions (but **not** flames) are welcome and should be sent to K Hindall (e-mail: either K_Hindall@qmrelay.mail.cornell.edu or kkh@cornellc.cit.cornell.edu; US mail: 110 Maple Ave., Ithaca, NY 14853). As long as we have a current address on them, contributors will receive a copy of any version of the guide in which their work appears.

A note on names: In order to maintain some consistency, the following explanation is given. The names of characters are given in the order in which they appear in the show. If this is Western normal order (i.e. family name last), the name is not marked. If in Japanese normal order (i.e. family name first), the first time the name appears in this guide it will be followed by a ¥. The names of real people (authors, directors, artists, etc.) are given in Western normal order - with the exception of our Benevolent Dictator, Tsao Sheng-Te, who, being a dictator, can have his name any way he wants it or (some say) because he is only a mass hallucination, anyway, and therefore not real. In cases of an article where the writer has used some other system, the names have been changed to fit the above scheme.

Spellings have *not* been standardized. Long vowels may indicated by ^, by doubling the vowel, by a following h or u, or not at all.

And finally....

WARNING!!!
Don't take our word for it!

We, the contributers to and editors of this guide, are not oracular fonts of anime wisdom. Neither are any of the people we borrowed from. Please remember at all times that not only are many of these shows open to interpretation or alternative explanation, but that there is also the undeniable possibility that we are simply wrong. If you disagree with any of the contents herein, don't just gripe behind our backs, gripe to our faces! There are addresses given above, or you can mention it at any CJAS meeting. Any legitimate complaint will be taken under advisement. This is, after all, the only way that we can change and improve the guide. The one and only thing we don't want to argue about is character names. In this guide, unless the character name is: 1. Seen written (eg "Char"); 2. An actual name (eg "Nausicaä"); or 3. A reference to something (eg "Sepia"), we accept and use anything that falls within the normal bounds of Japanese transliteration, with a preference for the phonetic. Of course, if a name does meet one of these characteristics, and we've missed it, you are more than welcome to point it out to us.

And now, without further ado, we bring you ...

The Cornell Japanese Animation Society's New Viewer's Guide

BASIC VOCABULARY (including some stuff you'll hear a lot in shows. A number of these were done by Tom Mitchell for AN ANIME GLOSSARY: ANIME STUFF'S ANIME GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR BEGINNING FANS. Anything he defined is in all caps.)

address forms - people are addressed by titles much more in Japanese than in English. The following are the most common forms of address (since they all have their origin in the family):

> **obaa-san** - "Grandmother." This is the way a person addresses their grandmother or any unknown woman old enough to be their grandmother.
>
> **oba-san** - "Aunt." This is the way a person addresses their aunt or the way a child addresses a female old enough to be the child's mother.
>
> **ojii-san** - "Grandfather." This is the way a person addresses their grandfather or any unknown man old enough to be their grandfather.
>
> **oji-san** - "Uncle." This is the way a person addresses their uncle or the way a child addresses a male old enough to be the child's father.
>
> **oka-san or ka-san** - "Mom." A girl/woman says "oka-san," a boy/man says "ka-san." Also how a person speaks of someone else's mother.
>
> **onei-san** - "Older sister." This is the way younger siblings address their older sister or the way a child addresses a female older than themselves (but not old enough to be the child's mother). Also how a person speaks of someone else's older sister.
>
> **oni-san** - "Older brother." This is the way younger siblings address their older brother or the way a child addresses a male older than themselves (but not old enough to be the child's father). Also how a person speaks of someone else's older brother.
>
> **oto-san or to-san** - "Dad." A girl/woman says "oto-san," a boy/man says "to-san." Also how a person speaks of someone else's father.
>
> **oyaji** - Literally, "old man," it is a very informal way for a boy to address his father (seems to be used only by adolescent boys).

anime - the Japanese word for animation. Used by American fans to mean specify animation made in Japan for the Japanese market.

ART BOOK - The "coffee table book" of the anime world. Typically a large sumptuously printed book featuring drawings, paintings, character designs, mecha designs, artist profiles, etc. from a particular anime. Lately there has been a trend to produce books highlighting particular anime artists and their work over their entire careers.

baka - Usually translated as "idiot," though some people think this is too mild. A very popular Japanese insult.

BGC - The acronym used by fans of the OAV series *BUBBLEGUM CRISIS*. Soon to have its named changed to *Bubblegum Crash*. But, obviously, the acronym will remain the same. [Actually, *Bubble Gum Crash!* seems to usually be abbreviated BGCrash! or BGC!.--KKH]

BGM - An acronym for "BackGround Music" which is basically the Japanese equivalent to our own term "Original Soundtrack Music" to describe music created for films, TV shows, etc.

-chan - an informal ending attached to a name or title. This is generally used by or to children or women (-kun being the variant for boys and men). For instance, a small child might address his/her mother as "oka-chan" or a guy might attach it to his girlfriend's name. Also, some especially "cute" women or girls get it attached to their name constantly - note how *everyone* in KOR says "Hikaru-chan."

CHARACTER DESIGNER - An illustrator, who's art typically has a certain look or style, that is hired to design the characters in an anime film. Some are manga artists, others are also animators. And some are just famous illustrators who have never drawn any manga or done any animation on their own.

IDOL SINGER - Typically a cute young female singing pop star or idol. Known for good looks, sometimes bad voices, and very short careers. Many are used to sing the songs for anime films. Very few have turned into long term singing talent.

IMAGE ALBUM/IMAGE MUSIC - Original music created to capture the theme or feeling of another related work. Basically this is music created by an artist to try an capture the mood of a manga story or additional themes similar to those created for a movie or soundtrack. This is not to be considered BGM.

Japanimation - Once the by-word of anime fans, this term is falling into disuse due to some people's tendency to mispronounce it. Most now use "Japanese animation" or just "anime."

-kun - an informal ending attached to a name. This is generally used by or to boys and men - it is less formal than -san but more formal than addressing someone just by his last name. See -chan.

LD - short for "laser disk."

Live Action - This refers to a film that is *not* animated - in other words, real people being filmed. A number of anime films have later been released live action.

manga - the Japanese word for a comic book or series of comics. Many anime begin as manga.

MECHA DESIGNER - A person or group of folks, who design all the hardware and vehicals, etc. in an anime film. There are also artists who specialize in **MONSTER DESIGN** too.

MOOK - A publication that blends the permanence and page count of a book with the splashy layout of a magazine to become a cross between the two. A term used a lot for anime artbooks that contain character designs, paintings, and other original art from an anime.

Miyazaki, Hayao (1941-) - Producer, director, writer, character designer, key animator, you name it. Arguably the greatest name (and certainly one of the names most often dropped) in anime, also having a high standing in the realm of film making in general. His works are the most Disney-esque of Japanese animation, with a penchant for amazingly high-quality animation, breath-taking visuals and happy endings. But, as anime fans seem to say so often, never think this stuff is just for children! Miyazaki's primary credits include (in no particular order): *Lupin III: Castle of Cagliostro*, *Future Boy Conan*, *Castle in the Sky: Laputa*, *My Neigbor Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Grave of the Fireflies*, *Omoide Poro Poro*, and, of course, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*.

OAV (or OVA) - stands for "Original Animated Video" (or "Original Video Animation," respectively). A show that was originally not shown on TV or in a cinema, but was only available through the home video market (i.e. on a videotape or LD). Sometimes the more popular ones will get a cinema release.

Pornography - Since so many people are inclined to get bent out of shape over the sexual content of anime, it's best to deal with this issue up front. Ninety percent of anime does have some sexual content, which tends to fall into three levels:

- ***Etchi*** -- this term does not translate very well, but generally refers to mild, PG-13 kind of material; usually nudity, usually female. By far the most common, *etchi* is often used for comic purposes and is usually only partly related to the story-line.
- **Soft-core** - also referred to by the titles of the two sex-comedy series, "Cream Lemon" and "Pink Noise." This kind is somewhat more extreme, both in actual content and suggestion. In most cases, the sexual content is also more directly related to (or sometimes the basis of) the story.
- **Hard-core** - Yes, there is pornographic anime. If you want to see it, most dealers have some available (with proof of age), but you're not likely to see it here.

-san - a formal ending on a name or title. Attached to a last name, it corresponds to Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms - attached to a first name or title, it simply denotes that one is on a fairly formal footing with that person.

-sama - a respectful ending on a name or title. It indicates that the person addressed is a great deal above the speaker socially (i.e. it is more formal than -san and less frequently used).

Takahashi, Rumiko - Creator of *Urusei Yatsura*, *Maisson Ikkoku*, and *Ranma 1/2*.

UY - Acronym used by the fans of the TV show Urusei Yatsura.

SHOWS

***Aim for the Top!* (a.k.a *Gunbuster*)**
Japanese Title: *Top o Nerae!*
Type: OAV series (6 episodes in 3 volumes).
Characters:
Takaya Noriko[¥] - a schoolgirl from Okinawa, whose father is the commander of Earth's first interstellar fleet.
Amano Kazumi[¥] - Noriko's "Big Sister", herself an ace pilot. Also known as "the Queen of the Roses."
Jung Freud - A Soviet pilot, and a major rival of both Noriko and Kazumi.
Ota Koichiro[¥] - Known to everyone as "Coach" and an old friend of Noriko's dead father. He thinks Noriko has the makings to be a great pilot.
Smith Toren - another pilot aboard the *Exelion*. Briefly Noriko's partner.
Captain Tashiro - the captain of the *Exelion* and the *Eltreum* (each of which is the flagship at different points in the series).

Synopses:
Episode 1-2: Noriko's father dies in humanity's first contact with the enemy that is to dog them through the series. Only Ota escapes. Six years later, Noriko is learning to pilot a "machine weapon" ... and despite how badly she does it, she is chosen by Ota for the Gunbuster project. Kazumi also is chosen for the project, and they leave with Ota for the *Exelion*, where they meet the third candidate for the project, Jung Freud.

Jung demonstrates her highly competitive streak by challenging Kazumi to a duel, but it is a draw. Then Ota takes Kazumi and Noriko to examine an unidentified object....

****

Spoiler for Episode 2: The object turns out to be the *Luxion*, Noriko's father's ship. Noriko goes searching for her father, but only finds the destroyed bridge. She vows to fight the enemy.

****

Episode 3: Kazumi doesn't want Noriko as her partner, because she is convinced that Noriko is not skilled enough and will get killed if she goes out in a fighter. Smith Toren, another pilot, takes Noriko on as his partner.

****

Spoiler for Episode 3: In her first battle, Noriko freezes, causing Smith to be killed. Noriko goes to Coach, begging him to teach her, vowing to do anything to become a good fighter.

****

Episode 4: Noriko trains with Coach in secret. Jung realizes that this means that Coach has tapped Noriko for the Gunbuster project, and she jealously challenges Noriko to a duel. The duel never happens - as soon as Noriko is outside the ship in a machine she panics and just sits there crying hysterically. Kazumi tries to talk Coach out of sending Noriko out in the Gunbuster, but it is to no avail.

The *Exelion* warps out for Earth, but is caught by an enemy attack. There are not enough machines for everyone, so Noriko is left behind on the ship.

****

Spoiler for Episode 4: The *Exelion*'s forces faltering, Noriko gets in the Gunbuster and joins battle. As Coach always suspected, Noriko saves everyone from the enemy.

****

Episode 5: Back on Earth, ten years have passed, while for the crew of the *Exelion* it has only been four months. Noriko bumps into her friend Kimiko, who is now 27 and has a small child, Tagami. An evacuation ship, the *Eltreum*, is being built, and Kimiko begs Noriko to use her connections in the military to get Tagami a place on it. An enemy invasion is sited.

Noriko catches the end of a fight between Coach and Kazumi, in which he hits Kazumi, who immediately runs out. Just after that, Coach collapses.

Kazumi and Noriko are sent out with the Gunbuster to meet the enemy invasion. Due to time dialation, although the trip will seem very short to them, six months will pass on Earth, and as they are blasting off, Kazumi tells Noriko that Coach is not expected to live another six months....

****

Spoiler for Episode 5: Just as they are about to meet the enemy, Kazumi cracks, unwilling to go further because she does not think she can go on without Coach. Noriko convinces Kazumi to fight with her, and they do so to devastating effect. They return to Earth to discover that somehow Coach has miraculously survived.

****

Episode 6: Yes, it's supposed to be in black-and-white. On Earth, fifteen years have passed, in which Kazumi and Coach were married, she became the coach at her and Noriko's old school, and Coach died. Now Kazumi is going to join Noriko in space as Earth launches its final plan. The final plan is Buster Machine 3 - the Black Hole Bomb. It will suck up the center of the galaxy which is where the enemy comes from.

For Noriko and Jung, it has only been six months since they left Earth. They are astounded to see a much older Kazumi. The final plan goes into action, and Jung angrily cedes her seat in the Buster Machine 2 to Kazumi. The battle does not go well....

Area 88
Type: 1 OAV series, 1 movie.
Subtitles:
Act I : "Skies of Betrayal"
Act II : "Pact of the Wolves"
Act III: "Burning Mirage"
The Dramatic Version - a movie made up of Acts I and II.
Released: 1985-87(?)
Special Notes: One of the very early OAV series.
Characters (in order of appearance):
Kazama Shin[¥] - the hero. He has light brown hair which tends to fall over his left eye and usually wears an orange flight suit.
Mutsuki Goh[¥] - called "Rocky" by everyone. Distinguishable chiefly by the camera he always carries around. A reporter who has decided to find out all he can about Shin.
Kanzaki Satoru[¥] - formerly Shin's best friend (they grew up at the same orphanage) and now the major villian. He has dark brown hair.
Saki Vashutal - The commander of Area 88. Although the son of the rebel commander, he serves in the monarchist forces. Saki's father, the elder brother and therefore the heir to the throne, was

disinherited by his father, the late king, because the old king didn't like his son's willingness to deal with the West. Later, Saki's father begins the war in an attempt to abolish the monarchy. Saki's that tall guy with the long black hair and the X-shaped scar on his forehead (it's self-inflicted, for being a traitor to his father).

McCoy - If you need anything at Area 88, McCoy has it, but you'd better be willing to pay. The old man with white hair.

Mickey Simon - An American pilot and Shin's best friend at Area 88. He's tall and blond.

Tsugumo Ryoko[¥] - Shin's beloved, who is waiting for him back in Tokyo. She has light lavender hair. Her father is the president of Yamato Air Lines (YAL).

Miss Yasuda - Mr. Tsugomo's secretary. She has light, reddish-blond hair and wears glasses. A friend of Ryoko's.

Synopses:

Act I: Basically an introduction to Area 88 and how Shin got there. Just as Shin and his best friend Kanzaki were finishing flight school in Paris, Kanzaki fooled Shin into signing a contract with the air force of a Middle Eastern country (Asran) which is involved in a civil war. Shin now must serve the loyalist forces at Area 88 until he earns $1.5 million (he is paid for every plane or tank destroyed), survives the 3 year term of the contract, or escapes ... but if he's caught escaping, he'll be executed for desertion. Meanwhile, Ryoko waits for him back in Tokyo, resisting pressure from Kanzaki to marry him. Shin - having only been in Area 88 about a year - is one plane short of his limit when....

Act II: Desperate to get back to Japan, Shin begins an escape attempt but is foiled by Mickey before he can get into trouble. In Japan, Ryoko's father begins to join Kanzaki in his campaign to get Ryoko married to him, while Kanzaki makes a deal with MacWell (an airplane manufacturer) that will gain him control of YAL. Miss Yasuda helps Ryoko track Shin to Area 88, but they are prevented from reaching Asran....

Act III: Shin's 3 years are nearly over, but the loyalist forces seem to be losing the civil war. Back in Tokyo, Ryoko tries to sell her YAL stock to Kanzaki, who is now the president of YAL, to get the money to pay off Shin's debt. Kanzaki agrees ... if Ryoko will sleep with him. While Ryoko looks for another buyer, a YAL airplane built by MacWell crashes with the loss of all passengers, and an investigation is begun into Kanzaki's behavior....

Arion

Type: Movie

Released: March 1986.

Special Notes: While the names of the characters and scene borrow from Greek mythology, the story has very little to do with it. If you know anything about the Greek myths, forget it while watching this film.

Characters (in approximate order of appearance):

Arion - a young Titan.

Hades - god of the underworld.

Demeter - goddess of the harvest.

Poseidon - god of the seas, leader of one side in this war of the gods.

Zeus - ruler of Olympus and god of the land, he leads the other side in the war of the gods.

Geedo - a giant from the underworld, and a friend of Arion's.

Seneca - a boy thief who Arion meets in his travels.

Athena - daughter of Zeus and commander of his troops.

Ares - god of war, son of Zeus and in his service.

Lesphina - Athena's beautiful, mute serving girl.

Apollon - Another son of Zeus, but he seems to prefer sitting on the sidelines of the war.

Synopsis:

The gods are a war in ancient Greece. Zeus rules the land and Poseidon the sea, but each of them wishes absolute control. Demeter and her son, Arion, are off in a peaceful part of Thrace, but Hades abducts Arion and gives him battle training. Hades tells Arion that his mother's blindness is caused by Zeus's curse, so Arion must kill Zeus for Demeter to see again. He also tells Arion that he is the son of Poseidon.

After escaping from Hades, Arion runs into Zeus's forces, led by Athena and Ares. He meets Athena's servant Lesphina, who becomes very fond of him, and helps him to escape. As Arion is drawn ever closer into the war, it is really Lesphina for whom he fights.

***Bubble Gum Crisis* (BGC)**

Type: OAV series (8 episodes)

Subtitles:

Volume 1: No subtitle
Volume 2: "Born to Kill"
Volume 3: "Blow Up"
Volume 4: "Revenge Road"
Volume 5: "Midnight Rambler"
Volume 6: "Red Eyes"
Volume 7: "Double Vision"
Volume 8: "Scoop Chaser"

Special Notes: The series was re-designed and is being continued under the title *Bubble Gum Crash!*

Characters:

The Knight Sabers - Silia (short black hair - her name is spelled many ways within the series and more outside of it), Priss (long light brown hair), Linna (also short black hair, but has more of it and tends to wear headbands) and Nene (longish, curly, red hair).

Maki - Silia's little brother, an assistant to the Knight Sabers.

Leon - an AD Police officer who has an unrequited affection for Priss. Brown hair.
Quincy - the president of Genom. White hair, fairly long.
Brian J. Mason - one of Genom's top officials, he seems to have more technical knowledge than Quincy; he certainly is more involved in the shadier parts of Genom's business. Dark hair worn flat to his head - looks a bit ghoulish.

Synopses:
Overview (By Tom Jayanama): The year is 2032 AD. A new city, MegaTokyo, has been built over the remains of the earthquake-ravaged Tokyo. A megacorporation, Genom, has been secretly selling weapons. One of its products, Boomers, are androids, some of which are designed specifically for combat, and these are usually tested by releasing them on the civilain populace. Only the Knight Sabers, four females incorporating the same Boomer technology into their exoskeleton armor, stand in their way. The four Knight Sabers are Priss (a rock star), Celia (a lingerie shop manager), Linna (an aerobics instructor), and Nene (an AD Police dispatcher).

Vol 1: The Knight Sabers are hired by the USSD (the space defense agency) to locate a missing child named Cynthia.

****

Spoiler to Vol 1: Cynthia turns out to be a Buma designed to control the beam weapon satellite. In her terror, she blows up the Floating City she is on.

****

Vol 2: The USSD asks the Knight Sabers to recover the control box to the beam weapon satellite. Meanwhile, the fiance of one of Linna's students (Irene) disappears under mysterious circumstances. Irene suspects Genom and fears she's next.

****

Spoiler to Vol 2: Irene's right - the Buma come after her and kill her. The Knight Sabers attack Genom. In the fighting, the control box is destroyed.

****

Vol 3: Genom is buying up land in order to build industrial cities and factories, but they are doing it in their usual charming fashion - throwing out people who live in the buildings without a moment's notice. A friend of Priss's is killed as she tries to rescue her life's savings from her apartment. The Knight Sabers go into action.

****

Spoiler to Vol 3: Mason and Silia battle at the top of the Genom building. Silia is victorious, and Mason is killed.

****

Vol 4: This episode is outside the Knight Saber-Genom storyline. A young man named J. B. Gibson, while driving with his girlfriend Naomi, is attacked by a motocycle gang. He recovers fairly well, but Naomi suffers from damage to her nervous system and intense fear. In revenge, he alters his car into a killer machine and hunts down motorcycle gang members. The Knight Sabers, at the request of Professor Raven (a friend of Gibson's), go off to stop him before he gets himself killed....

Vol. 5: A group of Buma - who are, incidentally, an illegal model - attempt to escape from an orbiting space station, but most of them are killed. One, Sylvie, survives with her friend, Anri, who is badly injured.

In MegaTokyo, Sylvie makes friends with Priss, but does not reveal her true nature to her. Meanwhile, a series of murders is taking place - the victims are found completely drained of blood, as if bitten by a vampire.

****

Spoiler to Vol. 5: Sylvie is the vampire. She is draining people in order to keep Anri alive while she infiltrates Genom and gets the specs on their Buma model so that she can cure Anri and stop killing. Unfortunately, Sylvie travels and fights in a Genom vehicle, which takes control of her when she is injured. Sylvie begs Priss to kill her, and Priss does.

****

Vol. 6: An unknown group is trying to blacken the reputation of the Knight Sabers by pretending to be them while committing crimes. Priss drops out of the Knight Sabers - after Sylvie's death, she doesn't feel like fighting anymore. The fake Knight Sabers turn out to be a group of super Bumas, under control of Largo, who kidnaps the Minister of Defense in order to get something called the Over Mind Control System as ransom. He is being assisted by Anri, who wants revenge on the Knight Sabers for Sylvie's death....

Vol. 7: A super attack vehicle attacks a Texan company that has just struck a deal with Genom to produce a new war Buma, but the scientist in charge of the project escapes. The next day, the hot rock star Vision arrives in MegaTokyo a week before her tour. She seems very familiar to Linna. Vision is actually Reika, the sister of Irene (see Vol. 2). She wants revenge for her sister's death and intends to get it by killing Quincy.

Meanwhile, the Knight Sabers are hired to protect Genom's visiting researcher....

Vol 8: Two problems for the Knight Sabers: a Genom scientist developing a series of Buma specifically to take out the Knight Sabers, and a nosey apprentice journalist named Lisa who wants to uncover the identity of the Knight Sabers in order to launch her career.

Black Magic M-66
Type: OAV
Released:
Special Notes: By Masamune Shiro (*Appleseed*).
Synopsis: (Adapted from Masaki Takai's article for *Anime Stuff* #5.)
During a thunderstorm, a helijet containing an Army secret project is downed. In the shock ofthe crash, the two assassin robots that were aboard in the cargo area begin to operate. Of course, the Army immediately begins to search for them but the robots have been programmed well to avoid discovery, and it takes the death of close to 10 soldiers before one of them is subdued.

The other robot, M-66, begins to operate according to the test program it was loaded with during its testing. Unfortunately, the target it was programmed with during testing was the inventor's granddaughter, Ferris. M-66 immediately begins to stalk her, trying to find out where she is. In the meantime, Sybel, a news photographer, who has been very interested in this project since the crash, goes to the professor's house in order to find out more about the robots. She finds the house trashed by M-66 and a video-note left by Ferris who says that she'll be home late because she's at Lumpring, a bar in town. Sybel, who has previously found out that the robot is after Ferris, immediately realizes that the only people who know that Ferris is at Lumpring is her and M-66!

Castle of Cagliostro
Type: Movie
Released: 1979
Special Notes: Directed by Hayao Miyazaki, this is probably the most famous piece of the entire Lupin III series (on this side of the Pacific, anyway).
Characters: (Descriptions other than Clarisse and the Duke are from the 1986 *Baycon Guide* by Toren Smith, Miyako Graham, and Steven R. Johnson.)
Lupin the Third - The world's greatest thief and the great-grandson of Arsene Lupin, the famous 19th century French thief. A master of disguise (some say that no one knows what he *really* looks like), Lupin is unbelievably cunning and resourceful. His weakness is women, especially the delectable Fujiko....
Daisuke Jigen[¥] - Lupin's right-hand man and a sharpshooter supreme; given anything even remotely resembling a gun, he never misses. Despite his lackadaisical attitude, he is a just and humane man.
Ishikawa Goemon[¥] - the third member of the Lupin team. He is the thirteenth in direct decent from the great Japanese thief who gave him his name -- Goemon Ishikawa. Goemon embodies the virtues of bushido, and wields a special sword that will cut through damn near anything.
Mine Fujiko[¥] - Lupin's on-again, off-again girlfriend, sometimes helping him, other times opposing him. She is also a devastatingly competent thief in her own right. Aside from her capriciousness, she is best know for her spectacular bustline (in Japanese, 'mine' means 'mountain peaks' -- heh, heh).
Detective Zenigata - The seventh generation descendant of the Edo period policeman, Zenigata Heiji. He is clever, determined and apparently indestructible -- the ideal foil for Lupin. Once a special investigator for the Japanese police, he has since joined Interpol so as to have the freedom to pursue Lupin over the entire globe ... which he does.
Clarisse - the Nausicaä look-alike; a young woman with fairly short red hair and very blue eyes.
Duke of Cagliostro - the heavy-set man with the attitude and the cravat.
Synopsis:
After an entertaining heist by Lupin and Jigen is foiled by their discovery that their loot is counterfeit, they decide to track the fake money to its source. Once across the border of the European country of Cagliostro, they happen across a young girl in bridal attire fleeing by car from determined pursuers. Despite their physics-defying best efforts, she is captured, leaving only a ring behind. Lupin follows the dual mystery of the counterfeit money and the kind-hearted girl from his past to the castle of the Duke of Cagliostro with Jigen, Goemon, and Detective Zenigata following behind. Surely even the mechinations of the evil Duke, the surprise appearance of Fujiko or the interference of Interpol will not be able to prevent the world's greatest thief from achieving a dramatic rescue, the uncovering of a subversive plot and the resolution to a generations-old mystery....

City Hunter (mostly adapted from Ping Kuo's "Introduction to City Hunter," Version 1.1)
Type: 2(?) TV series, 2 movies, OAVs.
Characters:
Saeba Ryo[¥] - the "City Hunter" of the title. A former mercenary, he is now a "sweeper," which seems to be the Japanese equivalent of a hired gun. Ryo sometimes seems to have a split personality - most of the time he seems to be a pathetic lech who chases any and all women in his vicinity, but suddenly, when it's important, he becomes the cool professional who can handle a gun better than anyone else on the planet. You can pretty much assume that the regular female characters are in love with him unless otherwise stated, but the only one he really loves is Kaori. He will never tell her, though, because he's afraid that someone will harm her.
Makimura Hideyuki[¥] - The brown-haired fellow with the glasses. A former policeman and Ryo's first partner in Japan. Quiet, calm, and professional, he does, until his death, all the support services that Ryo needs - screening clients, finding information, an extra gun when necessary. When he dies early in the first TV series, he asks Ryo to look after his "younger sister" Kaori.
Makimura Kaori[¥] - Short, brown hair with a tendency to whip out hammers and clobber Ryo whenever he's chasing a woman - which is because she loves him, of course. Her father was a criminal killed in a shootout, but Makimura's father brought her up and raised her as his own. She does not know her true past, and just before he died, Makimura swore Ryo to secrecy. She now does all the things Makimura used to do for Ryo.

Nogami Saeko[¥] - A beautiful woman detective of the Tokyo police. Her favorite weapons are throwing knives, but she is more than proficient with a gun. Saeko will often ask Ryo for assistance, the payment she offers him being sex, which - unsurprisingly - always works. But she always manages to get out of paying him. Apparently she was once involved in a love triangle with Makimura and Ryo and was going to make a decision when Makimura was killed. Now Kaori has replaced her brother in the triangle.

Nogami Reika[¥] - Saeko's younger sister, and sort of a female counterpart of Ryo. Once a police officer, she now is a private eye, most of whose clients are handsome men.

Umibozu - a.k.a. "Falcon." A former mercenary ... from the other side in the war in Central America in which Ryo fought. Now he and Ryo are sort of friends, although Umibozo's favorite boast is that no one but he could possibly kill Ryo. He's a giant, bald man. The name "Umibozo" refers to a bald monster from Japanese folklore.

Miki - Umibozu's partner (later, wife) and owner of the "Cat's Eye." He found her on a battlefield back in Central America when she was eight years old. He adopted her, raised her, and trained her, but then attempted to disappear in order to protect her. She tracked him to Japan and eventually, with Ryo's help, persuaded him to marry her. Chiefly notable for her lack of interest in Ryo.

Asoh Kasumi[¥] - A brilliant and beautiful thief from a long line of brilliant thieves. She was thrown out of her clan when the clan leader (her grandmother) discovered she was in love with Ryo and told that she could not come back unless she persuaded him to marry her and become a thief for their clan. She works as a waitress at the Cat's Eye.

Basic Outline:

Saeba Ryo was in a plane crash in Central America when he was three - it is believed that his parents died in that crash. He was raised by mercenaries and trained by them. After his side lost the war, he finally made his way to Japan, where he became a "sweeper." A typical story will be that a beautiful woman will hire Ryo, who, while working on the case, spends the whole show chasing her, which drives Kaori mad. Then one or more of the other characters may show up to help Ryo with the case, but there is certainly some opportunity for Ryo to demonstrate his brilliance with a gun. Finally, Ryo not only solves the case, but wins the heart of his client, but since he's really devoted to Kaori as well as being afraid that any woman connected with him will get hurt, nothing comes of this.

Cyber City OEDO

Type: OAV series

Subtitles:

Released: Began in 1991. Currently in production.

Special Notes: By Kawajiri, who did Supernatural Beast City, Demon City Shinjuku, and Midnight Eye Gokuu.

Characters:

Sengoku Shinsuke[¥] - Black hair with ponytail.

Googuru - Also sometimes rendered "Googol" or "Goggle." The big guy with the mohawk. A computer specialist.

Benten - The guy who looks like a woman.

Hasegawa Heizo[¥] - The police chief.

Barsus - a.k.a "Tin Can" (to Sengoku, anyway). The robot who works with our three sort-of cops.

Okyuu - The cute police officer with the crush on Sengoku.

Synopses:

Background and Vol. 1: (Adapted from Masaki Takai's article for *Anime Stuff*.) 3 criminals that have been locked up for life are offered a chance to become detectives. By capturing and bringing in other criminals, they reduce the time of their own sentence. Eventually, they might even reduce it enough to go free, if they survive that long. Each of them wears a collar which can't be removed and has an explosive implanted. Each time their boss, Hasegawa Heizo (a reference to an old special police force in ancient Tokyo (Edo)) assigns them to a case, he activates a timer such that if they don't solve the case and bring the criminal in within 24 hours, the explosive in the collars explodes and blows their heads off. Each of them has their own special weapon. Sengoku has his gun, Benten has his monofilament cutting threads, and Goggle has his strength and his computer skills.

The first OAV mostly concentrates on Sengoku. It seems that a group of terrorists have taken hostage a group of people in an elevator of the Cyber Tower, Oedo's tallest skyscraper. The control seems to be exerted through computer control over the Cyber Tower's main computers. However, when Goggle tries to trace the connections back, they all seem to lead back to the Cyber Tower. There's also the question of Dave Kurokawa, the main computer operator, who's in the computer control center of the Cyber Tower and remains incommunicado with the rest of the world. Could he be behind this or merely a pawn in the game?

Volume 2: This episode revolves around Googoru. The military has developed a new weapon, and Googoru is sent to test it. Can he overcome it? And what is it anyway?

Dagger of Kamui

Japanese Title: *Kamui no Ken.*

Released:

Special note: Although *shinobi* and *ninja* seem to be interchangeable terms, *shinobi* will be used here, since it is the term the film uses.

Characters:

Jiroo - a young shinobi of half-Japanese, half-Ainu descent. The hero.

Tenkai - a shinobi master of great power. That huge, bald man.

Wataru - the shinobi who trains Jiroo.
Oyuki - a female shinobi of Tenkai's.
Sam - a slave who Jiroo buys and tries unsuccessfully to free.
Chiko - a French girl raised by Native Americans. Her name actually turns out to be Julie, which she is called after that is discovered.

Synopsis:
A young boy (Jiroo) is wrongly accused of killing his adoptive mother and sister and has to flee. He is taken in by a shinobi master named Tenkai who helps him kill Tarooza, the man whom Tenkai says actually committed the crime. Jiroo decides to stay with Tenkai, who sees that he is trained as a shinobi and offers to look for Jiroo's real parents. But then Jiroo discovers that Tarooza was his father and that Tenkai knew it....

The Dirty Pair
Type: A TV series, a movie, OAVs.
Subtitles:
The Dirty Pair (TV series)
Project Eden (movie)
Affair of Nolandia (OAV)
Special Notes: First appeared as the movie on a movie screen in a scene of *Crusher Joe*. The makers got so many questions about "What movie was that?" that they developed a storyline for it. There is much unconfirmed speculation that one of the Pair (most folks think Yuri) is the mother of Crusher Joe.
Characters:
The Dirty Pair - This is their nickname; they *strongly* prefer to be called "the Lovely Angels" (their official codename). Throughout the TV series, they are both supposed to be 19. Kei has short, red hair and wears pale green; Yuri has long dark hair and wears pale yellow (the color of the uniforms changes in the movie and the OAVs).
Mughi - This is their giant, sapient cat, who greatly resembles a bear with a tail. According to one story, he was genetically engineered, according to another he's an extraterrestrial. He's as smart as the Pair (some say smarter!) and often saves them.
Nammo - The Pair's robot. Looks rather like R2D2.

Synopses: The Dirty Pair saga is generally episodic, so a basic plot premise is all you really need. These two lovely ladies are trouble consultants for the WWWA ("3WA" or the World Welfare Work Association, an interplanetary trouble-shooting agency). The motto of the 3WA is "I will solve any problem for you," and Kei and Yuri, with the help of the others aboard the *Lovely Angel* (their ship) do live up to this claim. Unfortunately, they usually solve the problem by destroying the planet it was on, a tendency that has earned them the fear of the galaxy and the nickname "The Dirty Pair".

Grave of the Fireflies
Type: Movie.
Released: 1988
Special Notes: *Very* sad. Some feel it is sadder than *Windaria*.
Characters:
Seita - a young boy from Kobe.
Setsuko - his sister
Their aunt

Synopsis:
Seita and Setsuko lose their mother and their home in a fire-bombing raid near the end of WWII (their father is away with the navy). They go and live with their aunt for awhile, but she doesn't want them due to the strict rationing. They decide to try live on their own in a cave that they know of....

Gundam, Mobile Suit
Japanese Title: *Kido Senshi Gundam*
Type: 3 TV series (a fourth being planned), 5 movies, 2 OAV series.
Subtitles (in order of release): ("MS" is an abbreviation for "Mobile Suit")
MS Gundam (*Kido Senshi Gundam*) - 1st TV series. (1979).
MS Z Gundam (*Kido Senshi Z Gundam*) - 2nd TV series. (1985) (Z is read as "Zeta").
MS ZZ Gundam (*Kido Senshi ZZ Gundam*) - 3rd TV series. (1986) (ZZ is read as "Double Zeta").
MS Gundam I-III - The first three movies, made mostly from the 1st TV series.
The Counterattack of Char (aka "The Gundam Final Movie") - the fourth movie. (1988).
Gundam 0080: The War in the Pocket - the 1st OAV series. (1989).
Gundam F91 - the 5th movie. (1991).
Gundam 0083 - the 2nd OAV series. (1991-present).
Gundam F93 - the 4th TV series, currently in production. Slated for release in 1993.
Special Notes: One of the great epics. Its release is considered by some to be "the beginning of modern anime" (the advent of *Space Cruiser Yamato* being the date used by most others).

Important Gundam Vocabulary: Some words are used over and over again, and it is assumed you know them. Given in alpha order.

Biosoldier: An artificial New Type. Apparently Biosoldiers are somehow not "real" people - genetically engineered perhaps?

EMF (Earth Military Forces): The military of the Earth Federation.

Minovski radiation/particles - radiation that disrupts electromagnetic radiation, rendering things like radar useless and making radio communications sporadic (communications are fine as long as there is a direct wire connection, as within the ships). This gives New Types great military importance - they can do a lot of things with brainwaves that used to be done by electromagnetic ones. Also, if a ship wants to take the risk of obscuring itself to its own forces, it can produce and scatter Minovski particles in the area in order to hide its presence from an enemy.

Mobile Suit - Basically a giant robot, controlled by a human being. Functions as an individual fighter craft.

Murasame: An artificial New Type, the name coming from the Murasame Institute which developed the process to create them. Murasames were born Old Types but have undergone a process that changes them into New Types. At least in the early phases of development, the process also wipes out their memories.

New Type - The next stage in human evolution. New Types sense things in their environment (asteroids, laser beams, other New Types), have empathy (and apparently sometimes telepathy), and some limited psychokinesis. Think of them as low- to middle-level ESPers. Many of the pilots are New Types, which is why they pick up on each other's presence so well. It is also why the dialog gets exceptionally strange at points. If you don't understand what they mean, chalk it up to New Type Weirdness.

Normal Suit - A space suit worn by a person to protect them from the environment of space. Term used to distinguish them from Mobile Suits.

Old Types - The original model human (in other words, folks like us). Apparently, this is still most of humanity, but mobile suit pilots tend to be New Types due to the fact that they perform better (i.e. survive).

Pilot Suit - A special type of space suit worn by mobile suit pilots. It's less bulky, so assumeably one can move faster and more accurately in it.

Psychomu (or psychomu system) - This refers to an interface within some mobile suits that allows a New Type pilot to make greater use of his/her powers, especially psychokinesis. You need a psychomu system to use funnels, for instance.

Side - a group of space colonies built at the same Lagrange point (places between the Earth and the moon where their respective gravities cancel each other out). Each colony within a Side has a name (e.g. Londenion) while the Side itself is numbered (e.g. Side 1).

Spacenoid - a person who lives on one of the space colonies.

Characters: (The entire Gundam saga literally has a cast of thousands. This list is *severely* abbreviated!)

Amuro Rey - The hero of *MS Gundam* and *The Counterattack of Char* (and therefore the major hero of the whole saga.) Generally a MS pilot for Earth forces. Does appear in *MS Z Gundam* (where he is supporting the AEUG cause on Earth). Has curly, reddish brown hair.

Char Aznable - The villain of *MS Gundam* and *The Counterattack of Char*, but he is one of the good guys in *MS Z Gundam*. He always supports the colonies (usually as both MS pilot and tactician), usually against Earth. That big blonde guy who likes to wear red.

Lalah Sun - love interest of both Char and Amuro in *MS Gundam*. Appears to be Indian. A Zeon MS pilot.

Fra Bow - would like to be Amuro's love interest in *MS Gundam*. Brown hair.

Bright Noah - Captain of various spaceships from *MS Gundam* to *The Counterattack of Char* (the only character to appear in everything between and including those shows). Tall man with black hair, always wears an EMF uniform, no matter whom he's currently fighting for.

Camille Vidan - the hero of *MS Z Gundam*, also appears in *MS ZZ Gundam*. MS pilot for AEUG. Black hair (blue highlights).

Four Murasame - Camille's love interest. MS pilot for the Titans. Her name is due to being the fourth Murasame. Obsessed with getting her memory back. Pale turquoise hair.

Fa Yuri - Would like to be Camille's love interest! MS pilot for AEUG. Black hair.

Jude Ashita - hero of *MS ZZ Gundam*. MS pilot for the Federation.

Lu Luka - Jude's love interest, and another MS pilot for the Federation.

Poodu - a ten-year old bio-soldier for the Neo-Zeon. She becomes very fond of Jude. Orange hair.

Haman Kahn - the leader of the Neo-Zeon and the main villain of *MS ZZ Gundam* (she appeared in *Z* as well). Pinkish-purple hair.

Nanai Migeru - Char's love interest in *The Counterattack*, as well as one of his top officers in the Neo-Zeon. Long blonde hair.

Chien Agi - Amuro's love interest in *The Counterattack*, also an engineer for the Lond Bell.

Quess Parayah - a 13 year old girl who is both a powerful New Type and rather emotionally disturbed. Daughter of a Federation official, but MS pilot for the Neo-Zeons. Green hair, long on one side, short on other.

Gyunei Guss - a Neo-Zeon officer, Char's bodyguard, and a Quess-chaser. Apparently the first truly successful artifical New Type.

Hathaway Noah - Bright Noah's son. Also devoted to Quess, and apparently a New Type.

Synopes:

The main saga, or what happens in *MS Gundam*, *MS Z Gundam*, *MS ZZ Gundam*, and *The Counterattack of Char*:

Having overpopulated and polluted the Earth, humanity decides to take an easier and less controversial expedient than controlling themselves and builds giant colonies in space. To mark this great point in humanity's history, they abandon their old calendar and date events from that year, which they declare UC 0000 (UC standing for "Universal Century." This is the calendar used throughout Gundam).

People begin to be born and live entirely on the space colonies and begin to view themselves as different from those who remained on Earth. The colonies are, however, ruled from Earth. A man named Zeon Zum Daikun from Side 3 begins to argue that space is fundamentally changing the consciousness of those who live in it and that therefore they should be autonomous of Earth. "New Type" consciousness, he believes, will render war obsolete, and the New Types will be able to solve all of humanity's problems.

In approx. UC 0070, Zeon Daikun dies, and events on the colonies take a turn for the worse. The Zabi family of Side 3 declare themselves, depending on the translation, either the Principality or Archduchy of Zeon, and begin, in UC 0079, to wage a particularly bloodthirsty war, fought mostly through the medium of Mobile Suits. The Zeon ace pilot is a man known as Char Aznable a.k.a. "The Red Comet," who, unbeknownst to the Zabis (or anyone else), is actually Cassoval Daikun, the son of Zeon Daikun, whom he knows was actually assassinated by the Zabis. His personal plan as far as the war is concerned is to eliminate the entire Zabi family.

The Federation, however, soon has an ace pilot of their own - Amuro Rey, the 16 year old pilot of the Gundam RX-78. The war rages until January 0080 (therefore it's known as "the One Year War"), and the Zeons are the losers. This is the story told in MS Gundam. The important event from this series to remember: During a battle between Char and Lalah Sun for the Zeons and Amuro for the EMF, Amuro accidentally kills Lalah when he was trying to kill Char (Lalah jumps in the way to protect Char). Obviously, since both of them were in love with her, this just adds to the bad blood between them.

As a result of the ferocity of the Zabis and their supporters, some equally ferocious people develop on Earth. They seem to think that if they can't utterly subjugate the colonies (first plan), they will destroy them (backup plan). The AEUG (Anti-Earth Union Government) arises to protect the colonies. Most of the characters we knew who were fighting for the Federation during the One Year War are with the AEUG during the Titan's Conflict (UC 0086-7), as is Char Aznable, though he spends most of the series pretending his name is Quattro Bagina. This is the story told in MS Z Gundam.

Meanwhile the former Zeons are regathering their strength under the figurehead rule of Mineva Zabi (the only surviving Zabi, she seems to be about 8 or 9 years old, and apparently Char decided not to include her in his vendetta) and the actual control of Haman Kahn. Haman is a radical of the old Zeon cut - she has no use for Earth or for any colony that she can't control. Her forces appear as the Axcis at the end of MS Z Gundam (the asteroid is their headquarters), but during MS ZZ Gundam ("Haman's Reign" is the name for this period, approx. UC 0088), they begin using the name Neo-Zeons. Haman Kahn is defeated by the folks on the *Ahgama* (Bright Noah's ship), who are apparently part of the Federation forces again (the Federation disowned the Titans late in MS Z Gundam, so apparently the people on the Ahgama returned to their original allegiences whatever those were - Bright's being the Federation).

The Counterattack of Char happens approx. UC 0093, somewhere near 14 years after the One Year War. Char has decided that the best hope for humanity is to make everyone New Types. He proposes to do this by making the Earth uninhabitable and therefore all humans will live in space (his plan: drop large asteroids on the planet and thereby bring about something like a "nuclear winter"). Amuro and Bright, with a bunch of helpers old and new (the Lond Bell), lead the fight against Char's Neo-Zeons....

Outside the main saga:

Gundam 0080: The War in the Pocket: A 6 part OAV series. A young boy named Al Izuruha from Side 6 eagerly gets involved in the One Year War and discovers that war is not as exciting as he thought it would be.

Gundam F91: It is now UC 0124, and the Cross Bomb Vanguard (very similar to the Zeons of the earlier part of the saga) take over the colony on which Seabook Arno lives. Despite his desire not to get involved in this stupid "adult" dispute, he finds himself piloting the new Gundam F91 against the invaders. Meanwhile, his love interest, Cecily Fairchild, has discovered that she is actually Bella Rona, the daughter of Korozo Rona (a.k.a Iron Mask), the leader of the CBV. She decides to join the CBV....

Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory: This takes place between *MS Gundam* and *MS Z Gundam*, in the year UC 0083. Young Kou Uraki is a MS test pilot for the Federation with no combat experience when a group of Zeon guerillas and their commander, Anavel Gato, steal a prototype MS. Kou rises to the occasion to battle the Zeon ace pilot with the other prototype....

Gundam F93: A TV series currently being planned for release in 1993. Not even a rumor about its story yet!

(Thanks to Frederik L. Schodt for his translations of Yoshiyuki Tomino's Gundam novels, Masaki Takai, William Chow, David Ng, Sheldon Yip and *ANIMAG* for all the help!)

Hokuto no Ken (By The High Diggy Doo, aka Martin Rose)
Type: 2 TV series, 1 movie.
English Title: *Fist of the North Star* according to Viz, which is OK; it has more dramatic potential than "Fist of Ursa Major" which is closer.
Basic Outline: A story of mystic martial arts in a post-apocalyptic era very reminiscent of "The Road Warrior" (food and water are valuable, money is worthless). A warrior with nothing to his name save the shirt on his back, the scars on his chest and the art of Hokuto Shinken wanders the wasteland of the future, battling evil, righting wrongs and Blowing Up the Bad Guys Real Good. It is, however, also deeply entrenched in a long tale of honor, love and sadness that makes Zeta Gundam seem shallow and cheerful by comparison. [I'm sure you'd like to re-phrase that, *wouldn't* you, Diggy? Or I shall be forced to throw rocks at your planet. -KKH]

Characters:
Kenshiro - the man with the seven scars. Master of the deadly art of Hokuto Shinken ("Great Bear God-Fist"), a particularly nasty fighting form which destroys an opponent from within. He seems to enjoy walking, which is a major source of disappointment for people who need help RIGHT NOW...
Batto ("Bart") - an annoying little kid with a car. Meets Kenshiro early on, and decides he might make a valuable source of income.
Lynn - a little girl. Driven mute when her parents were slaughtered before her eyes, her voice is restored by Kenshiro and she tags along with Bart and Ken.
Shin - blond hair, nutty as a fruitcake. Shin is the leader of much of the evil which plagues the beginning of the first series. He is a master of one of the myriad forms of Nanto Sei Ken ("Southern Cross Holy Fist"), the slice-n-dice counterpoint to Hokuto Shinken. It is written that the Hokuto and Nanto styles must never fight each other.
We'll have to see about that...
Yuria - red hair, sholder-length. Yuria is Kenshiro's girlfriend, and refuses to renounce him, even as she stands a prisoner in Shin's great capital city. She would wait forever for him, but does she have that long? (By the way, the reason why Yuria is in Shin's capital is linked to the reason that Kenshiro has seven scars on his chest...)
Raoh - BIG guy, likes helmets, capes and his HUGE black horse, Koku-Oh ("Black King"). Raoh witnessed the "fall" of Kenshiro (and seems unaware that he 'got better'), and, being the elder, jealous student of the art, has established an empire in his new chosen name, KEN-OH ("King Fist"). You do NOT mess with this guy.
Toki - ashen-white hair. Toki is Raoh's younger natural brother (Ken was an adopted child), and uses his skills with Hokuto Shinken to cure illnesses and heal. Unfortunately, he contracted radiation poisoning while securing a nuclear shelter, and his days are numbered...

And this is just the beginning. There are other members of the Nanto practice, both good and evil: Rei, Shu, Sauza, and the Nanto Go Sha Sei ("Five Chariot Stars"); there's Jagi, a particularly twisted man who scarred his own chest just to ruin Ken's reputation; Mamiya, a fiery woman who's murder with her Ninja Knitting Needles and a dead ringer for Yuria; Nantos beyond counting, flashbacks until you turn blue, the secret of Mu So Ten Sei, and this is just the first TV series...

TV series:

Hokuto no Ken: 109 episodes. Chronicles the rise of Kenshiro and the eventual fall of Raoh. But it's not what you think.

Hokuto no Ken 2: 50-or-so episodes. Picks up many years later; Bart and Lynn have grown into young adulthood, money has value again, new tyrants rule the land with an iron hand, and Kenshiro has been missing ever since the big fight with Raoh. The legend shall rise again, but strange forces are at work...and just what is the secret of Kaiyoh, the enormous man who seems very much like Raoh?

Movies:
Hokuto no Ken: A condensed rewrite of the first ~50 episodes of *Hokuto no Ken*. Better animation than the TV series, highlights the majorbattles and short-shrifts the plot.

OVAs:
None to date. Hey, there was nothing left to do with it. :)

Iczer-One (Adapted from the articles for *ANIMAG* by Michael Ebert, Carl Horn, Taka Nagatani, and Jeff Okamoto)
Type: OAVs, a movie.
Released: Began releasing in 1985.
Characters:
Iczer-1 - A female cyborg warrior created by unknown forces to protect Earth, but in order to do so she much first contact a chosen human and "synchronize." Only then can she use her full powers to protect the Earth. Iczer-1 with the aid of her partner can link with Iczer-Robo (Iczer-1's "other self") to increase her combative powers.
Kano Nagisa[¥] - A young Japanese school girl, and, unknown to herself, Iczer 1's human partner. She is the only person on earth who can "synchronize" with Iczer-1.
Cobalt - An alien soldier in the Cthulhu army, however looks just like a human female.
Sepia - A soldier, she also, appears to be human, and is apparently Cobalt's lover.

Sir Violet - The commander-in-chief of the Cthulhu forces, she looks like a female, but has a male's voice.
Big Gold: The leader of the Cthulhu, who appears as a mere long haired child in a small glass sphere.
Bedems - The bulk of the Cthulhu forces, they are creatures that take over human bodies, and eventually shed the human skins to reveal their true forms.

Synopses:

Act I: The Cthulhu forces arrive to invade Earth, but Iczer-1 also has arrived and is seeking her partner. Sir Violet tells Cobalt that the Cthulhu forces will try to kill Nagisa before Iczer-1 can synchronize with her, but that if they fail, Cobalt must destroy Iczer-1.

****

Spoiler to Act I: Iczer-1 saves Nagisa from attacks by the Cthulhu at her school, but fails to save Nagisa's parents the next day. Nagisa is not interested in synchronizing with Iczer-1 - she just wants her parents back.

Cobalt attacks. Nagisa originally refuses to help Iczer-1 pilot the Iczer-Robo, but finally joins in the fight in order to avenge her parents. Cobalt and her mecha are destroyed. Sepia vows to destroy Iczer-1 herself.

****

Act II: The Cthulhu Fortress Nova arrives on Earth. Iczer-1 attempts to persuade Nagisa to fight with her, but Nagisa refuses, blaming Iczer-1 for all that has happened. Meanwhile, the Cthulhu are creating a partner for Sepia.

Iczer-1 leaves to see what she can find out at the Fortress. Before she leaves Nagisa, she gives her a bracelet that she says will protect her.

****

Spoiler for Act II: Nagisa meets a small child named Sayoko and tries to protect her and her mother. Meanwhile, Sepia meets her new partner, Iczer-2, who immediately goes out to meet Iczer-1 and badly injures her.

Sayoko's mother is lost to a Bedem, but Nagisa manages to get to the Iczer-Robo. Iczer-2 releases Iczer-1 to join Nagisa because she promised Sepia to leave the kill to her. Nagisa vows that she has stopped running and will fight to defend Sayoko. The two giant robots face each other as the show ends.

****

Karura Mau (Adapted from a script (*Nara Onryô Emaki*) and synopses (of the OAV series), all by Miho Nishida)

Type: A movie and an OAV series.

Subtitles:

Nara Onryô Emaki (In English, *Nara Period Malignant Spirit Picture Scroll*) (1990) - A.k.a. "The Karura Mau Movie."

Sendai Kokeshi Curse Song - The OAV series, 6 episodes in 3 volumes.

Episode One: "The Unseen Jahôshi! Shôko, Maiko, Once Again."
Episode Two: "Ha-ja! Reveal the Ancient Mermaid Legend."
Episdoe Three: "Sai-Ha! Saw Love in a World of Illusion."

Characters: [Based on descriptions given in Miho Nishida's script for *Nara Onryô Emaki*.]

Shôko - Elder twin sister of the Ôgi family. Has the power to sense the ghosts/spirits. She uses Karura Ten no Sho <Writings of Heaven/Above>. Maiko calls her "Shii-chan". Fairly short black hair.

Maiko - Younger twin sister of the Ôgi family. Has the power to exorcise the ghosts/spirits. She uses Karuma Chi no Sho <Writing of Earth/Ground>. She is more athletically inclined than Shôko. Shôko calls her "Mai-chan". She has long reddish-brown hair that she wears in a ponytail.

Kenmochi - Another exorcist, but of a different style - for instance, one of his techniques is the use of needles. Apparently somehow affiliated with the Onmyôji Temple. He has very long brown hair.

Nishikiori - A private detective hired by the Cabinet Investigation division. Skeptical of the occult claims of the Ôgi sisters and Kenmochi during the movie, he becomes their support at the seat of power in the OAV series.

Grandmother of Shôko and Maiko - the previous Ôgi exorcist, now in retirement. She also gave Kenmochi some of his training. In times of emergency, she still helps out her granddaughters.

Ôchi no Wani - A female spirit of the Nara period. Though commanded to be the protector of human beings, in the movie she is nonetheless bound into maiming and killing when she is called awake by an unknown jutsu-shi (person of skill in curse/spell/magic). Although in the movie, it appeared that she had left the story, Shôko seems to have the sphere in which she resides during the series. Now she protects the Ôgi sisters when called upon.

Special Notes: This series is heavily based on Japanese history and religion. As such, it can be very difficult to follow, even with a script. It is strongly recommended that the viewer have some source other than this article in order to truly appreciate the series.

Synopses:

Nara Onryô Emaki: The Ôgi family have been exorcists for between 750-800 years. The head of the family has the ability to both sense and dispell spirits, but since the current (38th) generation of Ôgi are twins, the powers have been split. Because of this, Shôko and Maiko are very vulnerable when seperated. The powers of the Ôgi come from their god, Karura (originally the Hindu god, Garuda, possibly in his Buddhist form in this story), who appears like a man with the head of a bird.

Ikeda, a city assemblyman for the city of Nara, is murdered by a curse. Recently, Ikeda had been an ardent opponent of people who wished to restore Nara to what it had been during the Hei-An era when it was the capital of Japan - most specifically opposing the reconstruction of the Suzaku Gate. The Ôgi sisters and Kenmochi are sent to investigate the murder, accompanied by the skeptical Nishikiori. Shôko and Maiko are enrolled as students in the same school as Ikeda Omi[¥], the assemblyman's son. There they discover that Omi is an exoricist himself (the ability being passed down through his mother's family) and

capture the Ôchi no Wani. She protects them from a later spirit attack and tells them that the only way to defeat the evil magicians is to get the haha-kiri, a magical weapon. Kenmochi and Shôko go off to investigate the Suzaku Gate, while Maiko stays with Omi at his home. The twins being separated, it is the worst possible time for the enemy to attack....

Sendai Kokeshi Curse Song:
Episode 1: Shôko and Maiko are on a school trip in Sendai. Maiko and one of their classmates, Setsuko, go shopping for a *kokeshi*, one of the wooden dolls whose creation is a traditional craft in that area and therefore a typical souvenir. Meanwhile, Kenmochi is visiting a friend in Sendai. The friend, another man in the profession of mental development and exorcism, has the body of a mermaid that was pulled in by the local fisherman. Kenmochi teasingly asks if his friend is going to eat it (in Japanese folklore, eating mermaid meat gives you immortality), but the friend is worried that the appearance of this body is a portentious sign of something terrible. Kenmochi agrees.

That night, Setsuko is killed in her sleep by the *kokeshi*'s spirit, which Shôko and Maiko capture afterwards. Nishikiori pulls strings to have the case handed over to them, and they begin their investigation. Mifuyu, at the Tsurugi Jinja (the temple built around the God-Tree), informs her underlings that the latest kokeshi has been sealed by someone, but since it has such a specially strong curse, she will go to retrieve it.

When the twins go to bed that night, Shôko has a dream....

Spoiler to Episode 1: In the dream, Mifuyu demands that Shôko release the spirit of the *kokeshi*, which Shôko refuses to do. Shôko is attacked by child spirits with *kokeshi* carving implements. Finally, she releases the Ôchi no Wani, who drives off Mifuyu.

Episode 2: Shôko and Maiko prepare to set out to investigate different shops, in an attempt to find where the *kokeshi* was made. They quarrel with Ino, a police officer assigned to assist them (like Nishikiori before him, he doesn't believe in spirits). As the sisters head out, Shôko is accosted by teenage delinquents asking for money while Maiko returns to their room to fetch her video camera. Maiko returns and starts to jump in to help, but Fuyuki gets there before her. Fuyuki uses his mystical powers to drive the delinquents off (Fuyuki can control the wind, which he can use, among other things, to cut people). Fuyuki leaves hurriedly when he realizes Maiko is taping the scene.

On a visit to the Kokeshi Union, the twins find out that their *kokeshi* is not traditional - instead of the usual chrysanthemum, this one has a keshi flower. The sisters wonder if this isn't a clue.

As Kenmochi is leaving the temple of his friend, Fuyuki arrives. Kenmochi senses strangeness but continues on his way. Fuyuki goes into the temple and, using his power, takes the mermaid. Alerted by the cries of his friend, Kenmochi pursues Fuyuki, but fails to catch him.

The twins, meanwhile, find a kokeshi shop off the main street. The sign has an "*atejî*" for *kokeshi*. *Kokeshi* is usually written in *hira-kana*, but this shop spelled *kokeshi* with kanji for Small (*Ko*), Keshi flower (*Ke*) and Child(*Shi*). They visit the shop and inquire about the sign. The mistress of the shop (Koharu) answers them that their particular shop use that ateji word because her husband used to be fond of a poem about the keshi flower. (By the way, we, the viewers, get a glimpse of the mysterious poem we saw at the beginning of episode 1). Disappointed, the twins leave....

Spoiler to Episode 2: Fuyuki enters that very shop. Mifuyu, who was playing a string-game with Koharu, looks at his shoulder. "What a horrible thing he did to you," she says, and when Fuyuki asks her about the twins, Mifuyu answers that she will deal with them that night.

That night, while the twins are bathing in the natural hot-spring at their inn, they are visited by Mifuyu. They fight off the spirits with their exorcism powers. "I guess we really got the enemy upset this time," says Maiko. Outside, Mifuyu is laughing mysteriously....

Episode 3: At Tsurigi Jinja, Mifuyu asks the Shin-Guji (Master of the Temple) when the God Tree will blossom. The Shin-Guji answers that they would either have to retrieve the sealed kokeshi or gather another Ki of someone's horror. Fuyuki asks Mifuyu about the night before, noting that she somehow seems happy. Mifuyu answers that she found a potential friend. She states that she doesn't like the headstrong aspect of the girl, but that that could be easily remedied by the God Tree's seed. "She's someone you already know, Fuyuki-san," says Mifuyu.

The twins once again visit the Kokeshi shop owned by Koharu. While Koharu greets a man on an errand for the Tsurugi Jinja about an upcoming festival that is held once every 40 years, the twins notice the temple representation (miniature wood model). As the man is about to leave, Fuyuki arrives. Shôko thanks Fuyuki for his help the last time they met, and Fuyuki, taken aback, leaves the shop as if he was fleeing from it. Shôko decides that she want to find more about him, not excluding about his possible involvement with the Kokeshi Curse incident. Shôko succeeds in bullying Fuyuki to take her for a tour.

During a pause in their ride, Fuyuki asks Shôko why she can speak to him so normally. Isn't she afraid of him? Didn't she see what he did to that boy who was bothering her? Shôko answers that she did see what happened. She sensed the disruption of the Ki (the spiritual air) and the next thing she knew, the boy's hand started to bleed. Fuyuki asks why, then, can she be so civil with him. Though she doesn't usually condone violence, the act was to help her, after all.

At the kokeshi shop, Koharu asks Mifuyu what she is planning to do to the twins. Mifuyu answers that she wants Shôko to become her friend and help her increase the number of worshippers. Mifuyu asks Koharu-chan, as she calls her, to not interfere...

Spoiler to Episode 3: Koharu warns the twins that something terrible might happen and that they should leave immediately. Without answering specific questions, the lady hurriedly leaves. As the twins and the detective discuss the implication of this warning, they realize that Koharu is in danger.

Koharu returns to her shop and finds the curse kokeshi sitting on the shelf. Mifuyu tells her through the doll that she had warned her about this. Koharu had interfered. Would she grant Mifuyu's one last request? She needs Koharu-chan's Ki of horror. Koharu pleads with Mifuyu that she make this the last time she would do such a thing.

The twins and Ino arrive, but they are too late. Koharu is dead. She seems, however, to be pointing to a strange poem on the wall....

****

Episodes 4-6 will be covered in the next edition of the guide!

Kiki's Delivery Service
Japanese Title: *Majo no Takkyubin*, lit. *The Witch's Express Delivery.*
Type: Movie.
Released: 1989.
Special Notes: By Hayao Miyazaki.
Characters:
Kiki - the very first character we see: a 13-year-old girl with short dark hair. She spends most of the movie in a black dress with a large red bow on top of her head.
Jiji - Kiki's small black cat.
Tombo - the moderately goofy-looking kid with short orange-red hair and glasses.
Osono - the extremely pregnant lady. She has fairly short brown hair and is seldom seen without her apron on.
Ursula - a young woman artist with longer brown hair tied back into a pony-tail. She usually wears cut-off shorts and tank-tops.

Synopsis:
All young witches must leave home at the age of 13, and so Kiki packs up and takes off with Jiji to find her way in the world. Unable to perform any magic except flying, and even that not so very well, she starts a delivery service with the help of Osono and her husband. But though business proves to be rather difficult at times, the true challenges she faces are personal. Even Ursula's advice and Tombo's friendship can only help her so much when she must overcome her own lack of confidence....

***Kimagure Orange Road* (KOR)**
Type: TV series, Movie, OAV series
Subtitles:
I Want to Return to Those Days (aka "The Orange Road Movie.")
OAVs: "Legend of the White Lovers", "Hawaiian Suspense", "I am a Cat, I am a Goldfish", "Heart on Fire", "Weird Girl Akane" (aka "Hurricane Akane"), "Unexpected Situation".
Released: TV series began in 1986. They're still making OAVs.
Special Notes: The time line within the series (i.e. what order the different parts happen in) goes: the TV shows up until episode 46 and the OAVs, TV episodes 47-48, and the movie.
Characters:
Kasuga Kyosuke[¥] - the main character.
Ayukawa Madoka[¥] - the girl he likes. Long black hair.
Hiyama Hikaru[¥] - "Hikaru-chan." Kyosuke's girlfriend. Short light brown hair.
Kasuga Kurumi and Manami[¥] - Kyosuke's sisters. They're twins. Kurumi has long light brown hair and Manami has black hair and glasses.
Komatsu and Hatta - friends of Kyosuke's with severely overactive hormones. Komatsu has red-brown curly hair and Hatta has black hair and glasses.
Hino Yuusaku[¥] - hopelessly devoted to Hikaru. Light brown curly hair, fairly short, and often wearing a karate outfit.

Synopsis: (By Tom Jayanama)
Kasuga Kyosuke has just recently moved to a new city. In his new high school, he becomes involved in a love triangle between Ayukawa Madoka and her "little sister"/best friend, Hiyama Hikaru, both of whom have a schoolwide reputation as delinquents. At the same time Kyosuke is trying to cope with the problems a typical teenager faces (first love, dates, etc.), he and his younger twin sisters, Manami and Kurumi, all ESPers, are trying to conceal their powers as they try to lead "normal lives."

***Laputa* (*Castle in the Sky: Laputa.*)**
Type: Movie.
Released: 1986.
Special Notes: By Hayao Miyazaki.
Characters:
Sheeta - full name, Lusheeta Toel-ul Laputa. A girl in her early teens, with long dark hair worn in two braids. She wears the magic levitation stone pendant, controlled in part by the charms her grandmother taught her.
Pazu - the boy with short dark hair who immediately becomes Sheeta's companion and protector.
Dora & the Pirates - Dora is the older woman with stiff pink braids and missing teeth. She leads a band of pirates, a large group of hefty-looking men who all refer to her as "Mama." They are looking for Laputa in hopes of looting it, and so eventually let Sheeta and Pazu join up them.
Muska - full name, Lomuska Paro ul Laputa. Always seen in a brown suit and cravat; he has short brown hair and small glasses. He is in charge of the government agents.

Laputa -a floating kindom which once held all the lands beneath it in sway. But man could not endure away from the ground, and Laputa has now passed into legend....

Synopsis:

Trying to escape from the government agents who have kidnapped her, and the pirates who would like to, Sheeta falls from an airship and is rescued by the magical levitation stone she wears, and then by Pazu, who sees her fall. Pazu is busy working to re-discover the legendary flying island of Laputa once seen by his father, but willingly helps Sheeta run from the various groups who are trying to capture her. Discovering that Sheeta's stone is a product of Laputian technology, the two determine to find Laputa together. Soon it's the kids and the pirates racing the government and the military to reach Laputa first. But Muska is motivated by far more than simple greed....

Maison Ikkoku (Quotes within text are from the 1986 *BayCon Guide*.by Toren Smith, Miyako Graham, and Steven R. Johnson.)

Type: TV series, 2 movies, OAV series.

Released:

Special Notes: Another series from Rumiko Takahashi of UY and *Ranma* fame.

Characters:

Otonashi Kyooko[♥] (aka Kanrinin-san, "Manager") - the female lead (long black hair). Approx. 23-24 years old. She fell in love with one of her junior high school teachers and later married him, but he died young. The story begins exactly one year after her husband's death. "Otonashii" means "gentle, mild," and her name is obviously not an accident.

Sooichiroo-san and Sooichiroo-san -- actually, these two have very small parts, one being Kyooko's dead husband, and the other her dog, but the names needed explaining: When Kyooko and her husband first got their dog, they named him something like "Rover," or the Japanese equivalent. After the death of Kyooko's husband, the dog always came when Kyooko mentioned her husband's name. So eventually she gave up and officially named him Sooichiroo-san. Usually when you hear the name it is referring to her husband, but occasionally not, much to the confusion of both the audience and the other characters.

Godai Yuusaku[♥] -- the male lead (brown hair - looks rather like Ataru from UY in the early part of the series). He's a university *roonin*, a student who had graduated from high school, but has not yet passed the entrance exams for a university. At the beginning of the TV series, he's on his third or fourth try (makes him 21 or 22 years old). He works a large number of odd jobs to support himself while studying.

Mitaka - Kyooko's gorgeous tennis instructor. Very interested in Kyooko. Very tall, black hair, literally gleaming teeth.

The tenants of Maison Ikkoku:

Yotsuya - "a man of indeterminate age and mysterious employment"; a very odd man, the occupant of Rm. 4 ("Yotsu" is one of the ways of reading "four" in Japanese).

Akemi - "a shameless red-haired bombshell (her name means "red beauty") who works as a bar-hostess"; bar-hostesses in Japan are, by reputation anyway, a very small step away from prostitutes. She lives in Rm. 6 and is a born troublemaker.

Ichinose-san - "a hard drinking woman"; from room 1. ("Ichi" means "one.")

Basic Outline:

Godai has gotten sick of the craziness at Maison Ikkoku and has decided to move out. Just as he is about to announce this momentous decision, the new manager, Otonashi Kyooko, arrives, and Godai falls hopelessly in love with her. The rest of the series is Kyooko trying to decide whether or not she loves Godai, while a number of possible love interests (depending on which of the pair they're after) try in vain to gain Godai's or Kyooko's attention.

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind

Japanese Title: *Kaze no Tani no Nausicaä.*

Type: Movie.

Released: 1984.

Special Notes: Also by Hayao Miyazaki. If people will be assuming you've seen anything, this is it. And with good reason; this film is so impressive that even the extremely mutilated English version, *Warriors of the Wind*, has been known to recruit new anime fans.

Characters:

Nausicaä - probably the most recognized face in anime, Nausicaä is a pretty young woman with fairly short red hair. Her two most common accutrements are her glider Meve, and her pet fox-squirrel Teto.

Yupa - probably the most hidden face in anime, Yupa is largely obscured by an overwhelming mustache. He is normally further covered with a large-brimmed hat and a cloak. He is a renowned swordsman and Nausicaä's teacher.

Asberu -- a boy from Pejite whom Nausicaä saves from the denizens of the jungle.

Obaba-sama - [lit., Grandmother] a wise-woman, well versed in legends. Though she often must have others serve as her eyes, she is adept at interpreting and understanding situations.

Omu - [lit., lords of the insects] the guardians of the Rotten Ocean, these giant insects embody the forces of nature. They look something like giant pill-bugs.

Kushana - Imperial Princess of Torumekia and commander of their invasion forces. She is always at least partly covered in golden armor.

Kurotawa - Kushana's Chief of Staff.

Synopsis:: Some time in the future, mankind causes worldwide destruction through bio-engineered weaponry epitomized by the giant God-Soldiers. Eventually, nature begins to recover with the formation of the insect-infested Rotten Ocean (aka Rotten Sea, Toxic Jungle, etc.). The splintered remnants of

humanity struggle to survive and reunite. In the Valley of the Wind, so named because of the constant breeze which protects it from the Rotten Ocean's spores, the Princess Nausicaä seeks to accomplish these goals by working in harmony with nature. But others want to survive through a renenwal of the destruction and reunite through invasion and conquest....

Patlabor, Mobile Police

Type: 2 OAV series, a TV series, and a movie.

Special Notes: The title comes from the Japanese word for a police car - *patocar*, which is a compound of the English words "patrol car." By extension, if the Japanese police had labors (see synopsis below), they would be called "patlabors."

Characters:

Izumi Noa[¥] - The main character - that woman with short red hair. The pilot of one of the 2nd Platoon's labors. Every pet she's ever had has been named "Alphonse" ... so guess what she names her labor?

Shinohara Asuma[¥] - the son of the president of the Shinohara Company, maker of the police forces labors. His father made him become a police officer, and Asuma never forgives him for this. He's Noa's backup.

Yamazaki Hiromi[¥] - a giant, quiet man in the 2nd Platoon. His hobby is gardening. He drives the labor carrier that transports Alphonse.

Ota Isao[¥] - The trigger-happy labor pilot of the 2nd Platoon. The shorter guy with the heavy build.

Shinshi Mikiyasu[¥] - the only member of the 2nd Platoon who is married (and this is something of a problem for him) and the driver of the carrier for Ota's labor. The fellow with the glasses.

Kanuka Clancy[¥] - a Japanese-American police officer from New York City's department. She is quite simply the best, if a bit ruthless. Ota's backup.

Captain Goto - Commander of the 2nd Platoon. Fond of Commander Nagumo, but he also has a friendly rivalry with her.

Nagumo Shinobu[¥] - Commander of the 1st Platoon, the elite group to whom the 2nd Platoon is inevitably compared - to the 2nd's disadvantage.

Sakaki Seitaro[¥] - the man who keeps the 2nd Platoon's labors running, despite the punishment that they deal out to them.

Shiba Shigeo[¥] - Always called (as far as I can hear) "Shige". He's Sakaki's assistant and a mechanical & computer wizard.

Jitsuyama - yet another mechanical wizard, but he works for Shinohara.

Basic outline: (adapted from Masaki Takai's article for *Anime Stuff*):

The storyline revolves around a girl,Izumi Noa, who's dreamt all of her life of becoming a labor (the human-operated robots common in all Japanese anime shows) operator in Tokyo of the near future. Not just a labor operator, a police labor operator. Luckily, just as she transfers in, the Special Vehicle Section II, 2nd platoon gets their new labors, the Shinohara 98-AV Ingram which boasts the highest mobility of any labor to date. The story revolves around the actions of the 2nd Platoon and Noa's attachment to her labor, "Alphonse".

Project A-ko

Type: A movie and 3 OAVs.

Project A-ko (the movie) (1986)
Project A-ko II (May 1987).
Project A-ko III: Cinderella Rhapsody (June 1988)
Project A-ko IV: Final A-ko

Characters (Adapted from Bryan C. Wilkinson's article for *ANIMAG*):

Magami A-ko[¥] - A redhead with incredible abilities and a knack for getting into trouble. She usually wears a sailor suit school uniform. Although the armbands she always wears seem to be the source of her unusual powers, they are actually a restraint upon them.

Daitokuji B-ko[¥] - A-ko's violet-haired, glamorous antagonist. Becasue of her father, B-ko has lots of power, money, and connections. B-ko's ultimate goal in life is to befriend C-ko.

Kotobuki C-ko[¥] - A bubble-brained crybaby, yet ridiculously cute to the point where all others are attracted to her. She is an old school chum of A-ko's and sticks to her as if her life depended on it. C-ko has orange-blond hair, always wears a flower in it, and sports the same uniform as A-ko. Her natural talent is indirectly causing large-scale catastrophes, and the ability to create the best-looking and worst-tasting lunches . . .

Captain Napolipolita - The alien captain of a super fortress, searching for the "Daughter of the Fifth Queen of the Fourth Lepton Kingdom, Throne of the Swan, of the Star Alpha" (a lost princess).

Aridamro "D" Darim (Spy D) -- A secret alien agent planted on Earth by the Captain. Usually wears a green trenchcoat and dark glasses.

Ayumi Sensei (Teacher) - The overly good-looking teacher at Graviton Institute. She has blue-green hair and rides a red motorscooter. She is usually seen teaching an English lesson, reading nonsensical poetry.

B-ko's Minions - Asa has brown hair with a pony tail and is in charge of the other three; Ine is tall and skinny with short brown hair and buck teeth and does most of the spying for B-ko; Ume has short dark hair and glasses, is overweight, and usually operates vehicles or mecha; Mari is a gigantic, masculine girl in the Hokuto No Ken style and does the "grunt work" for the rest.

K - Sometimes spelled "Kei," as well. the only young man in the series (the only other men at all being B-ko's and A-ko's fathers). A-ko and B-ko are both hopelessly in love with him, but he is in love with C-ko, who hates him.

Basic Outline:
An alien spacecraft crashes onto Graviton City and destroys everything for 50 km around. Sixteen years later, the people of Graviton have rebuilt. There is to be no peace for them, however! C-ko and A-ko have transferred to the Graviton Institute, and B-ko only lives to destory A-ko and have C-ko to herself. The battles between them continously destroy large parts of the city [and do damage to any spacecraft that have the misfortune to be in the vicinity!].

Totoro
Japanese Title: *Tonari no Totoro*, trans. as *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Next-door Totoro*, or *Totoro of the Neighborhood*.]
Type: Movie.
Released: 1988.
Characters:
Kusakabe Satsuki[¥] - An eight (?) year old girl with short dark hair.
Kusakabe Mei[¥] - Satsuki's 4-year-old sister. She has slightly longer, lighter brown hair, usually worn in two pony-tails.
Oogaki and Grandmother Kanta - Two of the Kusakabes' new neighbors.
Totoros - Oototoro - [lit., big Totoro] looks something like a gigantic cross between an owl and a cat; Chuutotoro - [lit., middle Totoro] much smaller than Oototoro, and grayish instead of brown; Shootoro - [lit., small Totoro] the first to appear, this one is very small and pure white.
Synopsis:
Satsuki and Mei move with their father out to the countryside of the 1950's, while their mother is staying in a hospital in a nearby town. But they soon discover new friends in their neighbors, both human and otherwise! It is a vaguely autobiographical story (Miyazaki's mother spent several years in a hospital) which Miyazaki describes as an attempt at capturing a unique Japanese feel. But most find it of a more universal appeal. "Mr. Miyazaki expressed the feeling carefully, which we used to have in our childhood. We used to be interested in everything; a tadpole, an acorn, and small things. We may have seen TOTORO, usuwatari, or Neko-bus (Cat-bus). When I watched TOTORO, I thought, I may have forgotten very important things." [I'm trying to find the source of this quote, I just haven't succeeded yet....]

***Urusei Yatsura* (UY)**
Type: TV series, soon to be six movies, OAVs.
Released: Since 1981.
Subtitles:
The movies:
Only You (*Urusei Yatsura 1*)
Beautiful Dreamer (*Urusei Yatsura 2*)
Remember My Love (*Urusei Yatsura 3*)
Lum the Forever (*Urusei Yatsura 4*)
Boy Meets Girl (*Urusei Yatsura 5*)
Characters: (From Toren Smith's article for the 1986 *Baycon Guide*.by Toren Smith, Miyako Graham, and Steven R. Johnson.)
Moroboshi Ataru[¥] - In his heart of hearts, he really does love Lum -- more than any other girl - but he just can't keep his hands off other women (who, by and large, find him lecherous and unattractive).
Lum of Urusei - Beautiful, charming, more than a little bit sexy, and totally devoted to her 'Darling' (as she calls Ataru). Lum is also highly tempermental and willing to use any means at her disposal to keep him in line. One of these means is her natural ability to deliver a high-voltage electric shock - with the fickle Ataru a popular recipient.
Mendoo Shuutaroo[¥] - The only son of the richest family in Japan, Mendoo personifies honor, nobility, and style. Unfortunately, he knows it. Lum seems to be the only girl able to resist him, despite his desperate attempts to win her favor.
Shinobu - Ataru's ex-girlfriend, who gives up on him quite early in the series (about the same time that Lum moves into Ataru's bedroom closet!). Possessed of herculean strength when angry, she now has eyes only for Mendoo - who is so busy chasing Lum that he rarely even looks at Shinobu.
Megane and 'Lum's Guards' - A bunch of Ataru's schoolmates at Tomobiki High, all of whom are smitten with Lum. Megane ("Glasses") is the leader, and the most smitten.
Jariten - Also known as Ten and Ten-chan. Lum's cousin and Ataru's bane. Can fly, and breathes fire - usually at Ataru.
Ryuunosuke - An odd case. Her father raised her as a boy and even makes her dress like a boy. She's tough as nails, but yearns to act -- and especially to dress - like a girl.
Ran - One of Lum's old school chums. Sweet and cuddly on the outside, but oh, my! - she's rotten at the core. Is usually armed to the teeth with hidden weapons.
Benten - Another of Lum's old buddies, Benten is probably her best friend. She swears like a storm trooper and just loves to kick ass.
Oyuki - Yet another of Lum's friends. Soft-spoken and innocent, she is Queen of an ice planet.
"Cherry" - An itinerant Buddhist monk. A major source of aggravation for everyone on the show, most of all Ataru, who is sick of Cherry telling him that he has the "mark of doom" on this face. Loves to eat.
Sakura - Cherry's niece, the Tomobiki High School nurse, a Shinto shrine maiden, and a powerful psychic.
Basic Outline:
With nearly 300 TV episodes, not to mention the movies and OAVs, a complete synopsis of UY is obviously impossible here. In the first episode, Lum's people came to Earth and said that unless Earth's champion could defeat their champion, they would conquer the planet. For some strange reason, Ataru is Earth's champion, and to win he must grab Lum's horns. In order to give him incentive to win, Shinobu, who is his girlfriend at the time, promises to marry him if he wins. The next day, as he successfully grabs Lum's horns, he shouts "I am to be married!" Lum thinks this is a proposal and accepts.

Throughout the rest of the series, Lum attempts to make Ataru confess his love for her and to give up other women, while Ataru chases other women and refuses to say that he loves Lum.

Vampire Hunter D
Type: OAV
Released:
Synopsis: (By Tsao Sheng-Te for CJAS) The character design is nice (done by the famous illustrator-animator Amano (the production paintings he did for VH D are gorgeous)), and some of the visuals are very stylish. In the far future, earth is populated by mutants and monsters who terrorize the humans, and the land is ruled by semi-immortal Vampires who are bored with their lives. Count Lee had chosen a girl called Dory as his new bride, but the girl refuses to oblige. She hired a "vampire-hunter" named "D" to save her, but Count Lee is not easily defeated...

Vampire Princess Miyu
Type: OAV series
Subtitles:
Vol. 1: "City of Demons"
Vol. 2: "Feast of Marionettes"
Vol. 3: "Brittle Armour"
Vol. 4: "Frozen Time"
Characters:
Miyu - She looks like a teenage girl with golden eyes and long, braided brown hair, but she is a vampire whose job it is to send the shinma back to the darkness.
Lava - Also sometimes "Raba." He is a shinma who works with Miyu. The fellow in the huge black cape and harlequin mask who fights with his razor fingernails.
Himiko - A psychic and medium. She, too, fights the shinma. She also is after Miyu.
Basic Outline:
The shinma are somewhere between gods and demons (in fact, the word is sometimes translated as "deity spirit"). They were banished to "the darkness" that was their original home by humans, but now they are escaping and entering the human world. Shinma need to feed on human souls the way vampires feed on blood.

Miyu is a vampire who has the duty of sending escaped shinma back to the darkness (it isn't until the final volume that we find out how she got this job). Himiko is a human being with the same job, but she does not trust Miyu, for every time they meet, Miyu seems to be practising her vampirism. Despite Miyu's work combating evil shinma, Himiko - and the audience - are never quite sure which side Miyu is on.

Venus Wars
Type: Movie.
Released: 1989.
Characters:
Hiroki Senoo - "Hiro." The hero of the film. Originally a Rolling Game player with the Killer Commandos.
Margot Nakamoto - "Maggie." Hiro's girlfriend. Shoulder-length brown hair. Has the world's cutest cat, Andrew.
Susan Sommers - "Sue." A reporter from Earth. Blond hair.
Miranda Cocker - the leader of the Killer Commandos. Long red hair.
Gary - the mechanic for the Killer Commandos. They hide out at his place after the invasion.
Will - a Killer Commando. Becomes Sue's boyfriend.
Cathy - a Killer Commando groupie.
Jack - Another Killer Commando.
Jeffrey Carts - leader of the Hound motorcycle division of the Aphrodian army. Enjoys giving Hiro a rough time. That blond guy with Char's voice.
Donner - the leader of the Ishtarian forces.
Synopsis:
When an ice planet crashed into Venus, there became enough water on the planet to support life and people from Earth began to move there. A power struggle has developed between the two leading powers of the planet, Aphrodia and Ishtar, and Sue Sommers has gone to Venus to cover the story. She arrives in an Aphrodian city named Io.

The Ishtarians soon conquer Io, much to the distress of the Killer Commandos, a team that plays the Rolling Game, the most popular sport on Venus. They attempt to retake their stadium from the Ishtarians, but instead find themselves impressed into the Aphrodian forces. Hiro finds their commanding officer Carts more and more difficult to take....

Windaria: Legend of Fabulous Battle
Type: Movie
Released: 1986
Special notes: A very sad film, it is often the standard by which other sad films are measured (e.g. "*Grave of the Fireflies* is as depressing as *Windaria*").
Characters:
Maarin - has long orange hair and is constantly accompanied by a squirrel named "Bari-bari." A sweet child, very much in love with Izuu and very loyal to him.
Izuu - Maarin's husband. He lives very much for the moment (other than his desire to obtain great wealth), having only the vaguest notion that actions have consequences. Blonde hair.

Anasu - Princess of Isa. Long, dark brown hair. She is in love with Jiru, the Prince of Paro.
Jiru - Sometimes rendered "Jill." Anasu's beloved.
Kyle or Cail - A top minister in Paro. He very much supports war with Isa. Long black hair, very pale face.

Synopsis:
Windaria is the tragic story of three countries - Isa (the city by the sea), Paro (the city in the mountains) and Saki (the farming region between them) - and what happens when Isa and Paro go to war with each other. When Izuu saves Isa from an attack by Paro, it occurs to him that working for one side or the other in the coming war could win him and his wife great wealth and position. Maarin, however, wants him to keep out of it, for she is happy with their life as it is. Meanwhile, Anasu and Jiru try to keep their love for each other while their countries come ever closer to war. Finally, the battle begins....

***Yotoden* (a.k.a. *Prophecy of the Strange Sword*)**
Type: OAV series (3 episodes in 3 volumes)
Subtitles:
Vol. I: "The Chapter of Broken Prisons" (26 June 1988)
Vol II:
Vol III: "The Chapter of Blazing Flames
Characters:
Ayanosuke/Ayame - Her real name is Ayame, but after her clan is destroyed, she is masquerading as a man and therefore uses the male variant, Ayanosuke. Remeber that, despite appearances, *no one knows* she's female until Volume III. She is the last living member of the Kasumi ninja clan and wields a magical short sword that is hereditary in her family. She has long black hair that she wears in a ponytail.
Sakon - Last survivor of the Hyoga ninja clan. He wields a magical long sword that has belonged to the Hyoga for generations. He has very long, light brown hair.
Kogure Ryoma[¥] - That large, beefy fellow from the Hagakure clan (the son of the head of it). He wields a magical trident that has been handed down through his family.
Ryoan - a mysterious wandering monk who knows the prophecy of the sword.
Oda Nobunaga[¥] - the historical figure who attempted to unite all of Japan under his rule in the late sixteenth century. In this story, he is the villain. That samurai lord with the thin mustache.
Mori Ranmaru[¥] - Ostensibly Nobunaga's henchman, he is actually an evil being who holds Nobunaga under his control. A young pale man.
Oboroshu - Generic term for Nobunaga's demon warriors. Most of them resemble birds.
Synopses:
Volume I: A demon destroys the Kasumi clan. Ayame is given the family sword by her older brother who also orders her to escape while he returns to the battle. Later, as Ayanosuke, she meets Sakon with whom she is fighting when they are attacked by Jinnai (a demon servant of Nobunaga's) and some oboroshu. They are saved by Ryoan.

They reach the Hagakure lands together, where they meet Ryoma. They discover that they all have family legends about their weapons....

****

Spoiler to Volume I: The Hagakure are attacked that night. Ayanosuke finds herself battling Jinnai. It looks like she has won her battle, and Ryoma's sister, Kiyoko, who has fallen in love with Ayanosuke, rushes to embrace her. Jinnai attempts to shoot Ayanosuke with some spikes, but Kyoko sees this over Ayanosuke's shoulder and throws herself in the way. She dies.

Jinnai becomes the monster that destroyed Ayanosuke's clan and she fights and kills him. At Kiyoko's grave, she swears vengeance on whoever caused her grief.

****

Volume II: Ayanosuke, Sakon and Ryoma are now with the Iga ninja clan and fighting Nobunaga's forces with them. Koga ninja have appeared fighting with the enemy, but Wada Kayo[¥], a Koga ninja who looks *exactly* like Ryoma's dead sister but is actually the Iga leader's sister, saves Ryoma and Ayanosuke in a battle. She claims that the Koga are loyal to the alliance they made with the Iga. Sakon, not believing a word of it, refuses his assistance and leaves.

****

Spoiler to Volume II: Before the battle the Chief tells Ayanosuke and Ryoma that he expects to lose, so he first wishes to tell them of the legend of Yotoden, which he thinks is the key to defeating Nobunaga. All he knows, however, is that the legend is passes down orally by people "in a barren land."

It turns out that the Koga have indeed betrayed the Iga - Kayo was possessed by one of the oboroshu and forced to tell them otherwise. Ryoma is forced to kill her.

The remaining Iga end up killing themselves to avoid being taken prisoner by Nobunaga, but Ryoma and Ayanosuke get away.

****

Volume III: Will be covered in the next addition of the guide!